Exploring the Cultural Pathway of China's Modernization - Analyzing how Cultural Identity Shapes the Legitimacy of National Identity from the Perspective of the National Cultural Structure

Yong Wang
Beijing Foreign Studies University,China 100081
1036373640@qq.com

Wei Zhou*
School of Marxism, Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai 200234, China
weizhou2010@126.com

Abstract: Chinese-style modernisation has raised the major proposition of state building in contemporary China. Under the general consensus of an ancient civilisation of more than 5,000 years, the mechanisms and paths of how deep cultural traditions influence or constrain state building have not been clearly revealed. The theory of national cultural structure suggests that in the Chinese cultural identity-based state structure, cultural identity and national identity are naturally linked based on a long historical process, and the national cultural agenda is linked to the national political agenda, resulting in a "path lock" from cultural identity to national identity in the process of state building. In modern times, the process of globalisation, which began with Western capitalism, has forced such a cultural community as China, rooted in historical and cultural traditions, into the "coercive framework" of the modern nation-state, greatly weakening China's traditional bond of constructing national identity through cultural identity, leading to a chain reaction from traditional cultural crisis to national identity crisis, and shaking the national identity of the country. This has led to a chain reaction from traditional cultural crisis to national identity crisis, shaking the stability of the state structure, with wide-ranging effects. By sorting out the differences between the Western national identity-based state and the Chinese cultural identity-based state, and elaborating on the logic of China's state construction and transformation dilemmas as a cultural identity-based state in the long historical cycle, we will reveal in depth the national attributes and morphological characteristics of the cultural identity-based state, and then elucidate the path of China's distinctive state construction under the perspective of globalisation, which is based on the integration of cultural identity with national and religious identity, and clarify the initial cultural conditions for the launching of modernisation in the Middle Kingdom and the West. The differences in the initial cultural conditions for the launch of modernisation between China and the West have elucidated the special connotations and fundamental features of the Chinese modernisation path that are different from those of the West, so as to gain a deeper understanding of the profound connotations of "advancing the Chinese modernisation as the biggest politics", and to construct a unique theoretical logic of the Chinese modernisation path.

Keywords: Cultural Identity; National Identity; Cultural Transformation; National Cultural Structure; Chinese Modernisation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preliminary Discussion of National Identity and Cultural Identity

The modern state is a political state whose existence depends on the national identity of its members. "National identity is the conscious perception of members of differentiated ethnic groups to form a political community of 'nation' as their emotional and identity belonging through mutual recognition." It is generally believed that national identity is people's recognition and obedience to the country in which they live, and this kind of identity has the double connotation of "identity" and "identity behaviour" (Zhuojun & Hualing, 2014). National identity is, on the one hand, a political agenda chosen by the subject of the identity and, on the other hand, a "cultural agenda that identifies the country's history, symbols, meanings, symbols, and values " . In the national governance system, national identity is also a technical strategy for individuals to reach a unanimous "consent" based on cultural symbols and value systems, which is reflected in the cultural and ideological leadership of the state. In this sense, the cultural agenda also determines the scope and manner of the subject's choice of political agenda. Cultural identity is an affirmative attitude and a tendency to behave in a way that is supported by a specific culture and value system in nationals (members of an ethnic group), and it is also a social identity that is based on conscious and specific cultural forms(Friedman, 1994). This identity is linked to certain cultural structures and representational systems, and is reflected in a symbolic system of agreement and internalisation of representational practices and their results - meaning. This identity is linked to a certain cultural structure and representation system, and is reflected in a symbolic system of agreement and internalisation of the process of representational practice and its outcome - meaning. Specifically, cultural identity is a value that reflects the individual's sense of belonging to a culture through a certain psychological structure that reveals the individual's deep-rooted attitude towards culture. Modern state forms include national identity, religious identity and cultural identity. Different national attributes are characterised by different forms of national identity. The identity system of the cultural identity state is relatively complex, and specific cultural traditions have become a dominant factor in the construction of the modern state, which is not only reflected

in the mutual unity of "nation" and "state", but also in the "historical-cultural traditions" and "cultural traditions", and in the "historical-cultural traditions". Cultural tradition" is the mutual unity of "nation" and "state". Western sinologists, starting from the theory of nation-state, believe that in ancient China there existed a cultural identity system based on the "distinction between Chinese and barbarians" and the "world system", and that the shift from "worldism" to "nationalism" has led to the emergence of modern nationalism. The shift from "worldism" to nationalism, and the emergence of a new paradigm of modern nationalism - the nation-state - in China is the result of modern China's response to the impact of Western industrial civilisation. The modern nation-state is essentially a "constraining framework " for cultural communities. The uniqueness of China's politics, economy, and culture is rooted in its deep cultural tradition, which determines the difference between China's modernisation path and that of the West. Western scholars have constructed a Western-centred "Orientalism", creating an "Other" in relation to the West itself (Rabêlo Neto et al., 2022). Sinologists have used this logical paradigm to theorise the relationship between China's state form and its modernisation path, and have found in the process of exploring the relationship between cultural identity and state identity that China's cultural identity and state identity are different from those of the West. In the process of exploring the relationship between cultural identity and national identity, they have discovered that Chinese society has a completely different way of constructing the state from that of the West, but they have not yet established a theory of modernisation in China that is distinct from the Western path of modernisation. In his modern comparisons of Chinese and Western cultures, Liang Qichao began to notice the difference between the Chinese dynastic state and the modern nation-state. Qian Mu concluded from the interrelationship between the nation, culture and state that "the nation creates culture, and the culture is fused with the nation. The Chinese nation under this can be more fused and expanded to become a newer and bigger nation" (Jiang, 2002). Chinese and Western scholars have used the theories of "modernity" and "nation-state" to illustrate the difference between "Chinese and barbarians" and "the world system" in modern China. The influence and role of the "Chinese-Barbarians distinction" and the "world system" in the construction of the modern Chinese state have been elucidated, but because they have failed to touch upon the cultural structure of the state, the revelation of this influence and role appears to be general and ambiguous. Chinese scholars' exploration of

national identity has focused on the influence of the "world concept" and the "tribute system" on the construction of the modern Chinese state. Xu Jilin has elaborated on the relationship between family, state, and world and self-identity, and he has made insightful comments on the identity of the state in ancient China and modern China, the construction of the state in modern China, and the identity of the individual with respect to the world. He believes that "family, state and world" is a question of identity, and it is a unique way of identity for the Chinese people (Xu, 2024). In the ancient dynastic political power structure, power mainly came from the "mandate of heaven", and "heaven and earth" was often regarded as a metaphor for the dynastic power and the morality of the king. Confucian culture constructed the "heaven and earth" as a metaphor for the power of the dynasty and the morality of the king. Confucian culture constructs a superposition and hierarchical system of "family - state - world", where the "state" (dynasty) is folded into the "world", and the "world" (dynasty) is folded into the "world", and the "world" (dynasty) is folded into the "world". The "state" (dynasty) is folded into the "world", the "world" is the largest cultural community, and the "family" is the unit of action folded into the "state". The "family" and the "state" are inter-constructed through a hierarchical community of blood and clan. It forms the inclusive order of "heaven - country - home" at the level of political interpretation, and the outward order of "home - country - heaven" at the level of ethical interpretation. At the level of ethical interpretation, it forms the "family - country - world" extending order (Zhao, 2021). From the perspective of national modernisation, as early as more than a century ago, Max Weber systematically expounded the key role of Protestant ethics in the process of capitalist development, revealing the endogenous dynamics of the social and economic development of countries based on religious identity with monotheistic Christianity as the core. American scholars Huntington and Harrison were the first to point out that the process of political and economic development in Western countries is essentially a cultural process (Harrison, 2000). Chinese scholars, on the other hand, have pointed out that the transition from "traditional China" to "modern China" in modern times was initially in an unclear direction, but China eventually emerged from a "road of socialism with Chinese characteristics". "This is closely related to China's historical tradition. This is closely related to China's historical tradition (Keightley, 2022). The above is instructive in explaining the path of Chinese-style modernisation. Entering the 21st century, culture and values have shown prominent national strategic

significance in the context of the global nation-state structure. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out, "Make it clear that the excellent traditional Chinese culture is the outstanding advantage of the Chinese nation and our deepest cultural soft power"(Guanghui & Xiangdong, 2014). The 5,000-odd years of Chinese civilisation and the contemporary Chinese-style modernisation path are closely linked. "If there is no Chinese civilisation of 5,000 years, where are the Chinese characteristics? If there were no Chinese characteristics, where would there be the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics that we are so successful on today." which contains both the special cultural background and national connotation of the Chinese-style modernisation road, and the requirement of theoretical innovation for in-depth elaboration of the relationship between Chinese culture and the Chinese-style modernisation road. With the help of the theory of national cultural structure, this paper analyses in depth the influence and mechanism of cultural identity on the internal construction of the state, and reveals the path of state construction in modern China that is different from that of the West, so as to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Chinese-style modernization road.

2. NATIONAL CULTURAL STRUCTURES: AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MODERN STATE

As a system of national cultural organisation and operation nested within the economic, political and social structure of the state, the national cultural structure is a reflection of the interaction between the implicit structure of the state within the scope of national sovereignty, which is centred on culture and values, and the explicit structure consisting of the environment, the territory, the economic and political community, and the cultural and industrial system. It provides a theoretical analytical framework for the construction of the modern state by elaborating the interaction between the national identity system and the national sovereignty representation system.

2.1. Concept and Connotation of National Cultural Structure

For a long time, most Chinese academics have not made an in-depth academic distinction between "culture" and "national culture", and often use the terms "cultural community" or "culture". The conceptual paradigm of "culture" is often used to explain or replace the concepts of "national culture" and "culture of the nation", without forming a clear understanding

of the concepts of "culture" and "national culture". The conceptual paradigm of "culture" or "culture" is used to explain or replace "national culture" and "culture", without forming a differentiated understanding of the connotations of "culture" and "national culture". Mr Feng Tianyu put forward the "structural culture and ecology theory", which incorporates the ecological environment and economic and social life into the development process of national culture, and further clarifies the multidimensional structure of national culture (Meissner, 2006; Zhao et al., 2024). It provides a methodology that connects history and reality for analysing national history and culture and responding to economic, social and ecological realities of national development (Goswami et al., 2021). The methodology of the "structural culture and ecology theory" is also a good way to analyse national history and culture. Methodology5. In a world dominated by nation-states, the nation-state as the main carrier of culture has constructed the physical dimension of culture, allowing culture as a "metaphysics" to enter into the structure of geography, economic soil, and social system, thus forming a more grandiose explanatory framework (Wing-Wah, 2013). National culture is only one member of the family of "culture" concepts. National culture is the process of convergence of the cultures, values and behaviours of a variety of social subjects (governments, enterprises, non-profit institutions and individuals, etc.) and its results, based on the value identity and rights concession of social members to a political subject (the state), and valued by the interests of the community; the structure of the national culture refers to the ecological environment system, territorial territory, economic and political community and the cultural and industrial system as the external support, and cultural identity, values and behaviours as the external support, and cultural identity, values and behaviours as the external support. The national cultural structure refers to the internal and external structured functional system with the combined structure of ecological environment system, territorial map, economic and political community and cultural industry system as the external support, and the combined structure of cultural identity, national identity and religious identity as the internal power mechanism. Specifically, the national cultural structure consists of two parts: the "implicit structure" and the "explicit structure", and the mutual unity between the "implicit structure" and the "explicit structure". The mutual unity between the "implicit structure" and the "explicit structure" reflects the basic attributes of national culture and the basic structure of national culture (Figure. 1).
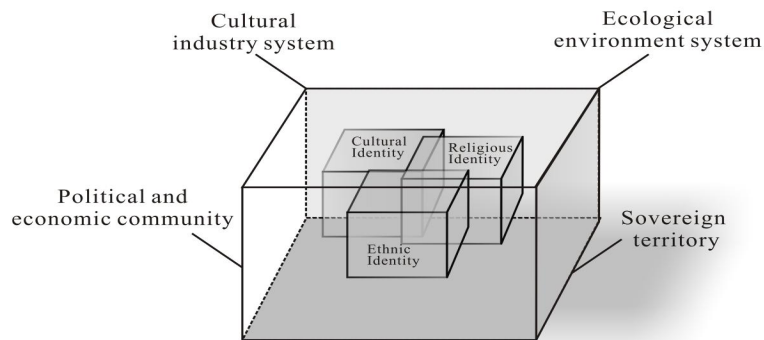
Figure 1: The basic structure of national culture

The interrelationship between cultural identity, national identity and religious identity constitutes the implicit structure in the national cultural structure. At the core of the implicit structure is an identity system consisting of different couplings between culture, ethnicity and religion. To a certain extent, the implicit structure defines the basic attributes of the state. If cultural identity embraces national identity and religious identity, a cultural identity type of state is formed; if national identity embraces cultural identity and religious identity, a national identity type of state is formed; if religious identity embraces cultural identity and national identity, a religious identity type of state is formed. The ecological system, the sovereignty map, the political and economic community and the cultural and industrial system constitute the epiphenomenal structure of the national cultural structure. The epiphenomenal structure is the basic structure and mode of operation demonstrated by the interaction of the underlying support system (ecological system and sovereignty map system), the process support system (political-economic system), and the representation system (cultural industry system). To a certain extent, the external structure determines the basic shape of the state, the difference between large and small states, continental and maritime states, developed and developing countries, etc. Natural geography and territory have an important impact on the construction of society, nation and even state, and play a pivotal role in the process of national identity construction. Feng Tianyu examines the "geographic environment determinism" from the height of the philosophical "meta-problem", pointing out that the logical error of this theory is that it infinitely exaggerates the scope of the role of the geographic environment, examines too many single factors, and neglects the subjective initiative of human beings in the process of self-advancement and self-improvement through practice (Han, 2013). The ecological synthesis of ecological environment and social conditions on which the reproduction of a nation depends constitutes the "cultural ecology "(Oakes, 2000) of that nation. In contrast to geographical factors,

"cultural ecology" as a theoretical tool discovers under the surface of Chinese history and culture the composite factors that constrain and influence the advancement and development of Chinese society, and "cultural ecology" summarises the "cultural characteristics" of a nation. Cultural ecology is a comprehensive way of observing the "cultural characteristics" of a nation. From another perspective, however, the geographical environment is a necessary condition for the formation of the culture of a nation or country. There is a relationship between the implicit structure of the national culture (socio-psychological characteristics and stable behavioural patterns, etc.) and the external structure (economic environment and geospatial formations, etc.) that influences and constrains each other. The cultural concepts and behaviours of a particular community of inhabitants act on the external environment and are transformed into the cultural creations of the state and the nation (ethnic group). Thus, the implicit and explicit structures form a mechanism of interaction and together constitute the basic connotation of national cultural strength. As an analytical paradigm, "national cultural structure" is fundamentally different from the prevailing academic theories of mass culture - the Frankfurt School's theory of cultural industry and the Birmingham School's theory of cultural consumption. are fundamentally different. The latter two mainly emphasise the integration of capital into other factors of production, including cultural factors, and the cultural behaviour of the people is affected by this, which is manifested in the fact that national identity and identity are pulled by the logic of 'capitalisation' of culture. Popular culture theory fails to provide a convincing explanation of how the "capitalisation" of culture optimises the cultural structure of countries with different types of identities, and even less about the link between national cultural structures and national cultural behaviour. The theory of "national cultural structure" further explores the role of culture in the construction of the state, demonstrates the different integrative roles of religion, ethnicity, and culture in the production of national soft power, and elaborates on the relationship between cultural forms and state forms.

2.2. China's National Attributes and Form as a Cultural Identity-Based State

Some scholars have suggested that China has the form of a "civilisation-based state": "a country in which an ancient civilisation stretching back thousands of years and a mega-modern state overlap almost completely".(Esherick, 2000) However, this concept fails to address the issue of "civilisation-based state" in the context of "civilisation-based

state". However, this concept does not provide an in-depth discussion of the connotation of a "civilisation-based state", but rather introduces the concept of a "civilisation-based state" into the political discourse narrative, obscuring the original meaning of China's cultural identity-based state. This paper argues that China is a "cultural identity state", which is marked by the dominant role of Chinese culture in the country's implicit cultural structure. First, China has an implicit national cultural structure that embraces national (ethnic) identity and religious identity with cultural identity. Since the Axis era, the Chinese have always placed cultural identity above national (ethnic) identity; national (ethnic) identity cannot exceed or override cultural identity and national identity, and the cultural identity of the nation must be greater than that of the nation (ethnic). The "Chinese nation" and the "China" that historically existed in the form of a dynasty shared a pluralistic and integrated Chinese cultural tradition, both as a political entity and as a cultural community. The "Chinese nation" is not primarily a nation and community based on physical anthropology, but a cultural community based on the cultural anthropology of Chinese cultural traditions, while "China" as a political and economic entity is the "Chinese nation" as a cultural community. China" as a political and economic entity is the epiphenomenal structure of the "Chinese nation" as a cultural community. According to Qian Mu, "the cultural conception of the Chinese is deeper than the national conception, in other words, the cultural boundaries are deeper than the national boundaries. ...... In other words, the national boundaries or the state boundaries cannot hinder or block the traditional cultural conception of the Chinese as a kind of macroscopic world meaning "(Friedman, 2016; Jiang, 2002). The Chinese people's identification with culture transcends ethnic or national boundaries. The essence of multi-ethnicity is a dual process of cultural integration and identity construction, which has resulted in the formation of a collective memory and a collective "national" identity, and the construction of a view of history, values, and the state that unifies religious and ethnic narratives with cultural narratives(Nyíri, 2011). In traditional societies, Chinese self-construction has always followed the technical path of overlapping ethical and political principles. The "filial piety" as the ethical principal of national culture and the "loyalty" as the political principal of state culture are connected, enabling the "orthodoxy" of dynastic state power to be established in the form of "loyalty and filial piety". "Loyalty and filial piety" as the moral foundation of the society is accepted and maintained by the public, "virtue, speech and merit" attitude and "respect for ghosts and gods and stay away from them" utilitarian values have always dominated the process of constructing the personality of an individual, both in the sense

that it is not only the individual's own personality, but also the individual's own personal integrity(Dong & Tian, 2009). The process of constructing personalities has not only eliminated the general public's need for religious transcendence, but also compressed the space for the interpretation of the "other world" by religions such as Buddhism and Taoism. Chinese culture does not refuse to exchange and learn from other cultures, but the Confucian tradition and the ethical and moral principles embedded in it have always been consistent and have never stopped. The plurality, plurality and multi-connectedness of Chinese culture have not only internalised the beliefs of many religions, but also satisfied the cultural survival requirements of many ethnic groups, and formed the main consciousness of the Chinese nation in the main dimension of cultural tradition, thus enabling the Chinese people to gradually anchor their own cultural traditions in the process of "cultural self-consciousness". Thus, in the process of "cultural self-consciousness", Chinese people gradually anchored their own cultural traditions -- the national spirit that maintains the continuity and stability of their culture (Fu & Ning, 2024). Secondly, China as a country of cultural identity is mainly manifested in the profound influence of history and cultural traditions on the national cultural outward structure. In the national cultural outward structure, the political and economic system of the dynastic state in Chinese history was characterised by "Confucianism and Legalism", and the shape of the political and economic system was heavily influenced by Confucianism and Legalism. Settlement and cultivation meant that small groups of blood relatives were constantly strengthened, and the "society of acquaintances" continued to grow; the agrarian economy meant that the relationship between people and land constituted the core of social relations in ancient times, and the strong combination of blood relatives and acquaintances and the agrarian economy formed the traditional Chinese "patriarchal society"(Khan et al., 2024). In the more than 2,000 years of patriarchal and authoritarian social evolution in China, the alternation and mutual use of the essence of the "Zhou system" (feudal system) and the "Qin system" (county system) and their institutional legacies were the basis for the cyclical dynastic turnover in ancient China and the formation of a "super-stable structure" of the society. The rotation and mutual use of the essence of the "Zhou system" and the "Qin system" (county system), as well as their institutional legacies, were important cultural and structural reasons for the cyclical change of dynasties in ancient China and the formation of the "super-stable structure "of society (Anagnost, 1997). The essence of the "Zhou system" lies in "virtue" and "rites and music", and its institutional legacy lies in "feudalism". In terms of natural economy, it formed the cognac economy

between the big feudal lords (big landlords) and the family members who lacked independence and autonomy; the essence of the "Qin system" lies in "law" and "autocracy", and its institutional legacy lies in the "household formation" and "autocracy". The essence of the "Qin system" was "law" and "autocracy", and its institutional legacy lay in the "compilation of households and the formation of people", which led to the formation of a subsistence farming economy between the big clans and the peasants who were relatively free in their personal lives, as well as a rent-and-tenancy economy between small landowners and tenants. The political and economic community of "landlords (clans)-bureaucrats-monarchs" was formed. The Chinese people's identification with territorial boundaries, however, stems from the inheritance and transformation of the "world system" established during the Axis Age, which is based on a "circle of concentric circles" of soft civilizational boundaries centered on Confucian culture. The territorial boundaries of China are based on a "concentric circle" of soft civilizational boundaries centered on Confucian culture, which is a flexible expression mechanism of the hierarchical order of civilization with the Confucian culture as the center and the foreign civilizations as the periphery. It is actually a "concentric circle"-style "Chinese world order" composed of the "Sinic Zone" centered on the dynasty, the "Inner Asian Zone", and the "Outer Zone"(Lu & Lu, 2001). Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty called the "world's nations one body" and considered himself the "emperor of the unified world"(Corradini, 2002). Emperor Jiaqing also called himself the "supreme ruler of the world"(Pozzi, 1994).This Chinese civilisation-centred cosmopolitanism constructed the basic principle of territorial mapping for the ancient Chinese, and established the logic of national governance in which the civilisation's sphere of influence and the dynastic map were collapsed. Third, the implicit and explicit structures of Chinese national culture are mutually reinforcing. Chinese culture and its values, as the implicit structure of the national culture, provide the conceptual and spiritual order of the Chinese people, while the territorial map system, the ecological system, the political and economic community, and the cultural and industrial system, as the externally manifested structure of the national culture, provide the order of the Chinese people's secular life. The internal conceptual order and the external order of daily life reinforce each other and become more and more solid, forming a "path dependence" effect in which the implicit and explicit structures of national culture are bound to each other.

2.3. Discussion of National Identity in the Perspective of National Cultural Structure

The interaction of the dual structure of "state-society" is based on various traditions, which are characterised by the invocation and transformation of faith traditions, national (ethnic) traditions and cultural traditions by the ruling group and the ruled group. The difference in the mode of interaction of the dual structure of "state-society" determines the essential difference in the national characteristics of the Western and Chinese civilisations.The Western state is a form of state construction based on religious and national identity. The interaction of the "state-society" binary structure of Western civilisation relies on three major traditions: the discursive rationality and democratic tradition of the Greek city-states, the legal concept and civil rights tradition of the Roman Empire, and the "monotheistic" faith tradition of Christianity. Corresponding to these three traditions are the ancient state systems characterised by aristocratic or royal rule: the ancient Greek city-state system, the ancient Roman system, and the medieval European state system (Gilpin, 1981). In the process of continuous reflection and abandonment of the three Western cultural traditions of "reason and democracy", "law and civil rights" and "Christian faith", Western civilisation has gradually unearthed the value core of humanism - the core of humanism. The value core of humanism - human subjectivity. The rediscovery of human nature has become the main line of value running through the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In Western civilisation, the emancipation of human nature is the "Promethean fire" that gradually breaks the shackles of the individual, and then coalesces into a community of communities, a community of nations, and even a community of states, creating Western "modernity". After the Enlightenment, Western civilisation has gradually evolved into a national identity-based state, which is characterised by the legitimacy of national identity through the flexible expropriation and constant rewriting of ethnic traditions, legal traditions, faith traditions, languages and scripts, rituals and customs by the implicit structure of the national culture (the identity system) and the construction of a national culture in which ethnic power is dominant over the power of the ruler and the power of the church, This process is projected in the "national culture" of the "nationalist" government. This process is projected in the interaction of the dual structure of "state-society", that is, the development of state power from monism to plurality, and the aggregation of discrete social actors into a community, with various communities interacting with each other in the form of games. The

characteristics of the Western national identity-based state are fully embodied in the modern international system, which is based on the principles of human emancipation, legal order and equality of states. The modern international system of Western Europe based on the nation-state mainly refers to the Westphalia system, the Peace Treaty of Westphalia signed in 1648, which replaced the non-rigid medieval order of national boundaries with a new contractual system, which consisted of territorial certainty, sovereign exclusivity and contractual legitimacy. In other words, the system changed the structure of the vertical system (top-down control of the state by the Pope with religious and secular power) that had existed within a certain context to a parallel structure of political and economic community, where modern nation-state relations were regulated by rules and balanced in a game. Nation-states do not interfere in each other's internal and each other's religious affairs. Relations between states within the Westphalian system are formally equal, with states recognising each other through statutory treaties as having equal rights to act autonomously within the system. The Westphalian system was not the only international system in the Western world, which was followed by the Vienna system and the Versailles system, and dominated the world by the Yalta system and the post-Cold War system1 (also known as the post-Yalta system) The modern nation-state is the basis for the formation of the Western international system, and the contemporary international legal order is derived from the Western value system.China is a nation-state constructed on the basis of cultural identity. Unlike the religious identity type of state, which constructs the objective world and national political system through "omnipotent idols", the Chinese trace the source of legitimacy of the dynastic state in the historical and cultural tradition of "respecting heaven and following the law of the ancestors", and trace the dynasty to the patriarchal system, and the patriarchal system to the totem system. From dynasty to patriarchal law, from patriarchal law to totem, "starting from totem, followed by patriarchal law, and then to the state". In this way, a "history-based Chinese spiritual world" was established, and the secular dynastic state was placed in the transcendental "world system", giving the dynastic state a transcendental meaning in history. Since the Axial Age, the Chinese have not developed a separate concept of "nature" or "wilderness" in opposition to human beings, but have instead replaced it with a humanistic tradition of "harmony between man and nature". Therefore, the spiritual world of the Chinese is not based on nature or religion, but on history. "History is composed by human effort, and human beings are always able to exert their mental power to conquer nature, so there is

history." The diverse religious beliefs' multifaceted interpretations of transcendental powers have enriched the Chinese understanding of the transcendence of the "relationship between man and nature", but have never been able to shake the Chinese methodology of interpreting the other world through historical and cultural perspectives. "China" as a super device of civilizational community has a weak religious nature and a pluralistic ethnic nature, with a self-generated integrative force of Chinese cultural identity. Religious beliefs and ethnic characteristics are included in the Chinese cultural community. Therefore, the dynasty state form is less influenced by religious concepts and is deeply influenced by concepts such as Confucianism and legalism. For example, the "unified empire" state form is the manifestation of a cultural identity system centered on Confucian culture in state governance. After being fermented by emperors such as Qin Shi Huang and Han Wudi, the Qin and Han governance systems gradually matured, forming a state governance system with the main body of monarchic centralization, county administrative units, and "Confucian exterior and legalist interior". Centralized monarchic absolutism, professional bureaucracy system, and county administrative units are important manifestations, with Confucianism as the core, "melding the kingly and the legal, "unified empire" becoming the core cultural tradition of the state and society. Levenson has pointed out that "China" as a modern political and economic entity is not "constructed", but transformed from China based on Confucian culture (Levenson, 1958).

3. THE LOGIC OF STATE CONSTRUCTION FROM CULTURAL IDENTITY TO NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ANCIENT CHINA

3.1. Cultural and Political Territories Collapsed: the Criterion of "Cultural Homogeneity" was used to Differentiate the Population and Territorial Boundaries of Dynasties.

Territorial identity is an important foundation of national identity. Territorial discourse is a kind of political culture, which is projected as spatial power in the dynastic state, and is the symbol of the state as a spatial entity. Successive Chinese dynasties regarded spatial power as one of the most important core powers of the state, which was realised through the mutual recognition of the identity of the subjects and the rights and interests of the territorial land - the establishment of a "spatial politics". The "spatial politics" of the dynastic state based on the cultural core of Confucianism and Legalism showed the characteristics of "spatial

superposition" and "cultural folding", with the cultural map and political map superimposed on each other. The "spatial politics" of the dynastic state is characterised by "spatial overlay" and "cultural folding", whereby the cultural map and the political map are superimposed on each other, and the "spatial politics" of the dynastic state is characterised by cultural topology - the presentation, circulation and cycle of the political ethics and its system of representation in the temporal dimension, as well as the flow, substitution, displacement, and continuity in the spatial and temporal dimensions. The so-called "spatial overlay" and "cultural folding" is a comprehensive description of the dynamic generative process and static presentation of China's "spatial politics" cultural topology, which reveals that the topology of ecological systems, political and economic systems, and cultural value systems within a specific map space is based on an endogenous and self-referential logic. It reveals a topological spatial pattern based on an endogenous self-referential logic between the ecological system, political and economic system, and the cultural value system within a specific map space in China. Spatial overlay refers to the production of behaviours and processes in spatial practice that are different from those of the original space, and is an important element of innovative space (Wen, 2020). Spatial overlay, as a "spatial overlay", is an important element of spatial innovation. Spatial folding, as a basic representation of "spatial politics" in the vertical dimension, participates in the cultural inheritance of ethnic groups and the multicultural spatial production and reproduction of the dynastic state in the territorial space, which is mainly embodied in the "ephemeral" characteristics of the national political arena. Folding as the basic character of "spatial politics" in the horizontal dimension, mainly refers to the mutual coupling, compromise and weighing of various cultural elements in multi-meaning, multi-selective and multi-level cultural contexts or cultural spaces to achieve a balanced state in a specific time or spatial dimension, which is mainly embodied in the "co-temporal" character of the national political arena. This is mainly reflected in the national political arena's characteristic of "co-temporality". Spatial superposition is the dynamic construction of cultural folding, and cultural folding is the static presentation of spatial superposition. The spatial superposition and cultural folding reflect the organic unity of "ephemerality" and "co-temporality" of the political field of the Chinese nation. According to the physical space dimension of the Chinese nation and the time dimension of Chinese civilisation, "spatial overlay" is visualised as the cycle of dynasties on the map of China in the past 2,000 years; "cultural folding" is materialised as the expansion and contraction of the "world system", and the "world

system" as the expansion and contraction of the "world system". The "cultural folding" is crystallised in the expansion and contraction of the "world system", i.e. the self-improvement and four-way dissemination of the broad Confucian culture system in the process of absorbing minority cultures and extra-territorial cultures, which is the illustration of the influence of the broad Confucian culture in the East Asian cultural circle of Chinese characters. Under the "world system," there was a distinction between the "interior" and the "frontier" of the dynastic state, with the boundaries of the vassal and neighbouring states as the limit, distinguishing the centre and the periphery of the dynastic state, and the interior and the exterior of the state. In the "hinterland-frontier" distinction In the spatial-political discourse of "interior-frontier", both the interior and the frontier coexisted without any spatial division in terms of ethnic groups and beliefs, and the difference was mainly the strength of the influence of Confucian culture. Therefore, there are two sets of correspondences between "nine states + four barbarians" and "political map" and "hinterland + frontier" and "cultural map". There are two sets of correspondences between "Kyushu + the four barbarians" and "political map" and "interior + frontier" and "cultural map". At the farthest end of the Confucian cultural influence, the imaginary boundaries of the dynastic state map between "internal" and "external" were also formed. The transport and chemical extension of the "Tianxia system" is the process of "transforming the world by summer", which does not rely on military conquest but on cultural assimilation. Therefore, the "folding" between the cultural territory and the political territory takes the cultural identity - the broad sense of Confucian culture - as the criterion, distinguishing the central plains inner circle, the border outer circle and the cultural radiation circle, and implementing different management systems and communication methods. Specifically, the dynastic state pursues the cultural contact mode of voluntariness, "the same is friendly to each other, and the different is respectful to each other".

（The Rites of Zhou (Book of Rites)）Based on "rites and music" and "humanities", it forms the internal and external governance structure of centralization and local autonomy, and the differentiation and heterogeneity between the central court and the frontier nationalities and countries. In terms of attitudes towards force,"The soldier is an ominous weapon, an object or evil, so the one with the right way is not in place." A gentleman is on the left, and a soldier is on the right. The soldier is an ominous tool, not a gentleman's tool, and has to use it, Stoic. It advocates peaceful coexistence in dealing with conflicts and differences, and develops

"kinship politics" through "kinship" cultural traditions (Xinfeng, 2020). With Confucian culture as the core, ritual, music, politics and education are not only the "self" identification mechanism of dynastic countries, but also the diplomatic principles of dynastic countries, so as to establish the real control area and virtual control far end of dynastic countries in the "world system".） The establishment of the cultural territory depends on Confucian culture as a special symbol of the nation state, representing the "appearance" of the state power and showing the process of continuous spatial overlap of the "frontier". Instead of establishing a real geographical "boundary" like Western nation states, the culture of ethnic minorities is folded into it through Confucian culture. First establish the Chinese cultural map and then realize the political map of the dynastic country.

3.2. 'Folding' of Taoism and Politics: The Internal Logic of Cultural Identity to the Dynastic State

Taoism refers to the 'study of virtue'. Taoism has two functions: general cultural function and special political function. Taoism is rooted in ancient Chinese society, is the ideological arsenal of the dynastic state, but also an important part of the psychological structure of the community at large, in the dynastic state, the Confucian cultural genealogy is the king's selective 'cut' and use, the general cultural ideology of society is transformed into a reflection of the imperial power and the will of the dynasty's special political ideology, and so there are This is why it is said that 'Taoism (unity) and Confucianism (unity) have the same origin'. Lin Gang also found this to be true: 'The legal system of the state and the history of the state largely overlap with the king's "genealogy of a family, the biography of a man." It is this overlap that is spoken of in the ancient saying that the king has no self. That is to say, the legal system and history of the state must be presented through the king's 'genealogy of a family, the biography of a man', without which there is no way to realise it '. As an operating system for the culture and values of the Taoist system, the Scholastic System 'guided' the metaphysical Taoist system to the metaphysical level and into the society of the general public. The government-run schools trained a large number of reserve talents who were well versed in the Confucian classics and exported the official orthodox cultural ideology; the rise of 'private schools', i.e. private academies, served as a defence against the expansion of Buddhism and Taoism, and safeguarded the secularity of Confucian beliefs. The 'qualified' dynastic state was inevitably a 'dual-centred' governance model of ethicalism and authoritarianism (Qin, 1998).

Moral ethics and dynastic secular power were mutually integrated, and in this sense, the Taoist system provided political legitimacy for the dynastic state. In this sense, Taoism provides political legitimacy for the dynastic state. Taoism is the unity of political form or the development of the polity, which stipulates the logic of the operation of the state power, and is the underlying logic of the political order - the ideal state of a rational society. According to Mou Zongsan's point of view, political unity is also the historical lineage of political practice in line with the spirit of the nation, and this so-called 'objective practice is something that comes from the past and is followed by the future, and the vertical unity is continuous, so it is called political unity '. In this sense, the continuity of national moral tradition and political tradition - "the integration of moral and political traditions" - is an ideal state. The moral tradition is established through "the integration of the three talents, adhering to the principle of holding two extremes and using the middle, and being an inner sage and an external king." The political philosophy implications of the moral tradition are closely linked to the political tradition. Lin Gang expressed Taoism as 'the historical concept of grand unity' and political unity as 'regime/state', arguing that there is both a clear difference and a kind of 'statehood' between the two. It is argued that there is both a clear difference and a form of 'superposition' between the two: 'The grand unified conception of history asserts that there is a higher existence above a certain regime/state, although it does not necessarily materialise as a regime/state. When it does not materialise as state power, majoritarianism is the value claim of politics. This claim should be valued above the concrete form of regime/state. Instead, the historical consciousness of grand unity is purely directed towards the sometimes non-existent regime/state, or it desperately seeks to manifest itself as a regime/state. It is important to realise that the grand unified historical consciousness is not merely shown as a cultural commonality, but more importantly, it is essentially a national identity birthed from historical activity.' After Emperor Han Wudi abolished the schools of various philosophical schools and made Confucianism the sole orthodoxy, the Confucian culture, centered on elucidating ethical principles, was further promoted and disseminated, thus becoming an "inclusive public good" shared by all social strata in China. In the dynastic state era, the emperor and the government officials had to work with each other to develop an inclusive public good. In the dynastic state era, the central upper class group represented by emperors and bureaucrats was the main inheritor of Taoism, official studies and orthodox history, forming the 'big tradition' and the space of Confucian orthodox culture, while the

local autonomous group represented by burghers and clansmen was the main inheritor of folk beliefs, private studies and local knowledge, forming the 'small tradition' and the space of local culture. The local autonomous groups represented by squires and clans are the main inheritors of folk beliefs, private schools and local knowledge, forming the 'small tradition' and local cultural space. The two of them have realised the 'collapsing' of Taoism and political system by means of the Chinese language and script, which are common to the whole society, and the Confucian cultural value system, which is promoted by the social elites. For example, the political demand of 'writing in the same language' is closely related to the functional reference of 'national unity', and has become a cultural measure commonly recognised by historians as conducive to the promotion of national unity. At the same time, the normative requirements of correct form, correct sound and correct voice formed by the Chinese language and script have become the quasi-balance for evaluating the orthodoxy of the dynastic culture.In the case of dynasty states, the doctrinal tradition shaped the religious affiliation and cultural identity of ancient China from the perspective of thought, playing the role of a "quasi-religion;the political tradition, on the other hand, shaped the paradigm of dynastic rule and political identity in ancient society from the perspective of political and economic practices, playing the role of normative legitimacy for the regime. The political and doctrinal traditions folded together through the medium of the broad-based Confucian cultural community, achieving the continuity of doctrinal and political lineages, the inherent logical consistency of doctrinal and political ethics, and the cultural topological continuity of the evolutionary process of doctrinal and political development, thus constructing the logic of moving from cultural identity to political identity in dynasty states.

3.3. "House-State Integration" and the Core Values of National Culture

National culture is a cultural form created and developed in a certain historical process, reflecting the overall characteristics of a nation, and it is a cultural value system and daily life style shared by the people of a nation and a country. It is a kind of cultural psychological tendency that is imprinted on the daily behaviour, institutional customs and artifacts of the people. In terms of content, it is also a combination of a nation's historical and cultural traditions and the culture of the times. The general psychological tendency and characteristics of the nation are the basic form of the national spiritual home. "In a certain sense, China's nation is an expanded family, which infuses the meaning of national identity into the

family identity." The social view that self-cultivation, family harmony, and governing the country are interconnected also strengthens the national identity of Chinese people to some extent. The family, as the basic unit of the ancient Chinese society, has achieved cultural and social "homogeneity with the state" with the central government (the supreme political unit) through sharing cultural value symbols and their meanings. In the era of dynasty state, "homogeneity with the state" constituted the core value of the national culture of Chinese citizens, and its resource as the citizens' spiritual homeland was more distinctly manifested as follows: (1) The mutual dependence between the people and the dynasty state. The people regard the state as their parents, and the state must love the people and govern for their benefit in a "paternalistic" way; at the same time, the state regards the people as the "foundation of the state". (2) The people exist and stand on the basis of the state, but the political entity of the state (a dynasty of one family) is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is the "Tai-chi" (cultural community) beyond the state. Therefore, "Tai-chi" becomes the place where the citizens' spiritual homeland is located. The reason why 'family and country' can become the spiritual home of the nation lies in the fact that the patriarchal spirit and patriarchal system form a strong linking mechanism between the individual and the collective, and between the family and the state. It constructs a sense of community boundaries and 'rooted emotions' among members of the community. 'Rooted emotions among members of an ethnic group are derived from blood-borne community imagery caused by shared ancestral memories.' 'Ethnic identity is the social and cultural identity that people derive from the community in which they have grown up for a long time.' Despite the decline of patriarchal feudalism and the rise of counties since the Qin and Han dynasties, the patriarchal spirit and related institutions have been passed on. The patriarchal spirit governed the family-based bloodline community and the clan-based local political organisation, which interacted and transformed, supported each other, and achieved each other's successes, constructing a 'society of human kindness' that is rich in the characteristics of Chinese society. This cultural community is also full of morality and ethics, kinship and neighbourhood: 'The Chinese promote the family relationship from the middle, while the ethical organisation of society dissolves the two ends of the spectrum, the individual and the group. Therefore, China is an ethically oriented society with a strong family system. It is in this cultural community that the spiritual home of the Chinese is established: 'Through a community of history and destiny, memories can be kept alive and actions can be kept honourable. For it is

only in the change of generations sharing a historical and quasi-familial bond that the individual can hope to achieve immortality in an age of purely territorial horizons. The Confucian spirit and the Confucian culture, which include the concepts of "family-state homogeneity" and "ethical norms," are not only a system of ideas, but also a methodology. The Confucian ideology and the Confucian order were not only transmitted within the Han ethnic group in the Central Plains, but also diffused to minority ethnic groups in the process of the continuous integration of the Chinese nation. The ethnic groups on the frontier have absorbed and internalized the Confucian spirit. When the Khitans established their state, Yelü Abaochi used the form of opening a "horizontal bureau" and building a "royal bureau" to "transform the family into a state". In the early days of the Jin Dynasty, the Jin Dynasty initially imitated the Liao Dynasty's system and later changed to a Han-style system, "the cities, palaces, and laws and orders were all the same as those of China". Over the course of thousands of years, the Confucian spirit and the Confucian cultural tradition have shaped a universal national spirit, and the people of all lands have established their recognition of the legitimacy of the "Heaven-approved" dynasty through the regulation of Confucian spirit. It was in this cultural atmosphere that, on the political level, "loyalty to the emperor and love of the country" went from being a personal character pursuit to the moral obligation that the dynasty had towards its citizens; on the cultural level, "loyalty and filial piety are interconnected" provided enough ethical and cultural space for "rule by man," and successive dynasties ran their states with moral ethics as the logic, forming a Confucianist ideology of governance by virtue. It was the mutual reference, assimilation, and reinvention of the Confucian orthodox cultural space and the local cultural space that formed the Confucian ethical order that could unite society and the state, accumulating and being passed down across generations, and internalizing itself as the background color of the spiritual world of the Chinese people.

4. THE CHAIN REACTION FROM CULTURAL IDENTITY TO NATIONAL IDENTITY TRIGGERED BY MODERN TRANSFORMATION

4.1. "Reversal of the Relationship between the Chinese and the Barbarians": The logical Breakdown of Cultural Identity Towards National Identity

In the process of colliding with the Western industrial civilization of the

Qing Dynasty, the Western powers forcibly opened the gates of the feudal dynasty of China with their "warships and cannons." The full-scale invasion of Western military force, state political and economic models, lifestyles, and Christian cultural ideological models directly led to the collapse of the "world system" and the tribute system supported by foreign vassals of the dynasty state, and also caused the collapse of the "distinction between the Chinese and the barbarians" and the logical breakdown of the construction of the nation-state based on cultural identity in the process of transforming the dynasty state into a modern nation-state. If the "distinction between the Chinese and the barbarians" is transformed into the "otherness problem" (theotherness) of philosophy, politics, ethics, anthropology, cultural theory, and so on, it may be easier to understand the theoretical and ideological dilemmas of modern Chinese society. In the dynasty state, the "four barbarians" as the "other concept" was a category with clear connotation and scope, generally judged by civilization and barbarism, enlightenment and unenlightenment. "For centuries and generations, the Chinese who have been at the top of the 'world order' pyramid have continuously accepted the loyal and obedient 'barbarians' from the foreign vassal states." Once it entered the modern era, the concept of "Xi Yi" not only blurred the boundaries of "culture and barbarism," "center and frontier," and "civilization and uncivilization" in epistemology, but also in values, the Chinese and the Xi Yi must have different hearts, and they are considered heretics to each other. Even the Xi Yi are considered to have superiority in technology, material wealth, and political systems compared to the Chinese. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the extreme cultural superiority of modern Chinese people was replaced by a collective cultural inferiority complex.（Xiao Gongqin, 2021）. In the era of dynastic state, the bridge connecting the cultural identity of the ethnic groups and the national identity was the national cultural self-confidence based on 'the distinction between the barbarians and the summers', and it was based on the civilisational potential superiority of the Han cultural community of the Central Plains over the 'four barbarians' of the frontier ethnic groups. This kind of national and state cultural self-confidence constructed the social mass psychological structure and national legitimacy cornerstone of the cultural identity state (non-national state) in the era of the Chinese dynasty. However, the modern Western civilisation armed by the Industrial Revolution is a high-potential cultural system compared to the traditional Chinese agrarian civilisation. In front of the high-potential industrial civilisation, modern China suffered repeated defeats in wars, and

the Chinese nation was on the verge of extinction. On the one hand, this made the Chinese elites gradually lose their inherent cultural self-confidence, and on the other hand, it also dismantled the consistent way of constructing a dynastic state, in which the cultural identity was folded up with the national identity. After 1840, with the powerful push of Western industrial civilization, China's traditional society entered a profound period of division in response to the impact of Western civilization. The new knowledge group shaped by Western-style "new learning" with modern scientific and technological core and its educational system, as well as the decline of Confucian "old learning" and the imperial examination system, led to the collapse of the traditional academic community. The multi-ethnic nation governed by a unified culture community was forced to enter the framework of the "self" and "other" opposition in modern "nationalism", leading to the collapse of the diverse ethnic community. The long-term debate and confrontation between the reformers advocating Western-style cultural innovation and the conservatives adhering to Confucian culture has led the Chinese nation cultural community into a continuous process of disintegration. In particular, the international political and economic system based on the nation-state has overturned the "world system" and the "tribute system" of the central dynasty, breaking up the traditional "cultural map". The unequal treaties imposed by Western colonialists have led to the loss of territory, while the aggravation of ethnic conflicts and ethnic separatism has further intensified the tension on the frontier. Moreover, the sovereignty system of the legal "political map" cannot be established internally by the dynasty state and has to rely on external diplomatic relations. All of this led to a reversal of the traditional "civilizing the barbarians" model, causing confusion in the inherent logic of nation-building that subordinates ethnic identity and religious identity to cultural identity. This resulted in a chain reaction of cultural identity crises leading to a national identity crisis during China's modern transition period.

4.2. Loss of Cultural Confidence and Dissolution of the Sense of Belonging to a Spiritual Home

The gradual dissolution and reversal of the "barrier between the Chinese and the barbarians" since the modern era has also led to the dissolution of the "spiritual homeland" function of Confucian culture and traditional culture. In the homogeneous society of the dynasty state, the elite social stratum could effectively integrate various groups and members of all social strata through the Confucian cultural system, promoting a unified identity recognition of the country. After China was incorporated into the global

capitalist market system in modern times, however, Confucian culture was transmitted in a closed and self-defensive cycle, lacking basic cross-cultural dialogue capabilities, causing intellectuals to misrecognize Confucian culture and Western culture, constantly denying themselves in the reference system of the "other" in the West and becoming lost in the "antinomy dilemma". Meanwhile, as the industrialization process proceeded, Confucian culture gradually became "museumized", detaching itself from secular life and becoming a cultural specimen that could satisfy emotional needs but might not have practical value in the eyes of the Chinese people (Levenson, 1958). This situation in which Confucian culture was merely a "cultural specimen" to be "viewed" but not "used" further exacerbated the loss of Confucian culture as the spiritual homeland of the Chinese people. After the Xinhai Revolution, the combined effects of market economic activities and the "mirror image" function of Western culture stimulated the awakening of individual subject consciousness throughout society, supporting the collapse of the Confucian cultural system that underpinned cultural and national identity with the collapse of the imperial system. The people gradually lost trust and loyalty to the previous cultural system, with Confucianism as the representative of traditional Chinese culture collapsing completely. Yan Fu even argued that Confucian culture "began with deceit and ended in shamelessness," not only was Qin Shi Huang and Li Si the millennial scourge, but if one extrapolated the logic to its full extent, the Six Classics and the Five Masters were also ultimately responsible, "the Six Classics and the Five Masters have held sway over the world, 'because of their dominance, they produced deceit; because of their deceit, right and wrong were confused, and honor and shame were lost, and the world's troubles reached a point where they could not be revived again'." Confucian culture could no longer be relied upon, and modern China was plunged into an unprecedented profound order crisis and meaning crisis. The dissolution of Confucianism and traditional culture as a spiritual homeland for the Chinese people was inevitable, with its own logical trajectory. The "family, nation, and world" that the Chinese people have always upheld is the continuous body of traditional Chinese meaning framework, and the family and the nation are the intermediary objects between the individual self and the world in the spiritual form of direct communication. But after several decades of "breaking through the net" of the "great disembedding" revolution in modern times, the continuous body of the family, nation, and world was broken, which had a huge impact on Chinese society: "First, due to the loss of social and worldly constraints, state authority became supreme. Second, due to the 'disembedding' from

the common community of family, nation, and world, the modern self became a disembodied individual with no basis, and lost its meaning of existence."

4.3. "Chinese body, Western use": Separation of the Implicit Structure and Explicit Structure in National Culture

The degree to which a theory is realized in a country is always determined by the extent to which it meets the needs of that country （The Collected Works of Marx and Engels，2012）. In the dynasty state, the implicit structure and explicit structure of national culture were consistent, with the "body" being clear and the "use" being practical, and the "body" and "use" being integrated, with an inherent consistency. In the latter half of the 19th century, Western industrial civilization spread eastward, causing "the destruction of the entire basis of China's peasant economy and family industry, making the "Chinese body, Chinese use, body-use integration" national cultural construction logic that had lasted for a thousand years increasingly face serious theoretical dilemmas, with the implicit structure and explicit structure of national culture becoming disconnected. As a theoretical and methodological approach to respond to the national crisis and guide the modernization of the country, the Yangmudi faction proposed the "Chinese body, Western use" theory. From the perspective of national cultural structure theory, "Chinese body, Western use" as a modernization theory is a contradiction in which the implicit structure and explicit structure are separated. The "Xiyong" approach focuses on the external structural aspects of national culture (such as Western science and technology and political and economic and cultural systems), while the "Zhongti" approach focuses on the internal structural aspects of national culture (such as Confucian cultural values). The "Zhongti Xiyong" proposition fundamentally contradicts the mutual influence and restraint between the internal and external structural aspects of national culture, and seeks to reconcile the tension between the "Western political tradition" and the "Chinese moral tradition" within the framework of "national state". The reason why "Zhongti Xiyong" as a theoretical tool for modernization is unable to shoulder the historical task of guiding national modernization is that it fails to meet the requirement of unity between the implicit and explicit structures of national culture, and is unable to provide theoretical support for the legitimacy of modern states. This point is understood very clearly by Yan Fu: "The middle school has its own body and use, and the Western school has its own body and use. When they are separated, they

stand side by side, but when they are combined, they both disappear." He criticized the logical fallacy of the "Zhongti Xiyong" argument and explained the reason why the body and use of Chinese and Western studies cannot be separated and cannot be married. Yan Fu's far-sightedness as an enlightenment thinker lies in the fact that the material forces of Western powers, including warships and cannons, are not isolated He revealed the differences between China and the West as the differences between China's patriarchal society and the Western modern state, and argued that the confrontation and conflict between Eastern and Western civilizations stemmed from the differences between patriarchal society and modern state society, thus proposing the "integrate the old and the new, embrace the East and the West" integration of Chinese and Western civilizations. He advocated for the integration of Chinese and Western new and old cultures based on the Chinese cultural foundation: "We must have a broad vision and think far ahead, integrate the old and the new and see their interconnectedness, embrace the East and the West and consider their wholeness, and then we will understand it. The difficulty of doing this is like this. He also believed that although this path was very difficult, it was the only way to go. Yan Fu's conservative strategy in culture, which was rooted in his profound understanding of the "national character" - that is, the cultural identity function of the nation. Yan Fu attached special importance to the unique function of cultural identity in the Chinese nation in his later years, emphasizing the need to preserve the foundations of the state while pursuing Western wealth and strength: advocating for the preservation of the "national character" based on the cultural identity of the Chinese nation, which is rooted in the unique characteristics of the nation: "The reason why you are so enamored of other nations is that, put simply, it is mostly their material civilization that you are enamored of. You don't know that the classification of countries and races is based on the national character and the people's quality, and that the material aspects are not what is emphasized. The national character and people's quality of China are rooted in a grand and magnificent source, and cannot be slandered too much. ······ Such as what Spencer calls dynamic, equilibrium, and flexibility, which make up an unshakable nation, and the reason why it is like this is It cannot be achieved by relying on the leftovers of other civilizations. The national character and people's quality that have been nurtured by the enlightened sages and kings of previous dynasties for thousands of years form the basis for this. He uses the example of the Manchus and Mongols ruling China to illustrate that as long as the national

character persists, even if a new dynasty replaces the old one, it is only the fall of the country, and the world is not truly lost. Based on his profound insight into the nature of Chinese and Western civilizations, Yan Fu transformed the issue of the conflict between Chinese and Western cultures into a historical trajectory of "change from feudalism to nation-state" in China, and sought to establish a modernization strategy based on the cultural foundations of China to absorb the modern civilization achievements of the West. He profoundly revealed the dialectical characteristics of the drive to acquire Western modern science, technology, and political systems, and the need to maintain China's "cultural identity" in the process of China's modernization. However, this modernization strategy also contains an inherent theoretical dilemma between the internal cultural identity and the external economic and political systems, highlighting the powerful tension between the two major themes of the external structural evolution (science, technology, and political modernization) and the internal structure (the "defense of the barbarians" and the maintenance of cultural identity). The theoretical dilemma faced by modern China reveals the "path dependence" feature of China's modernization path. The integration feature of cultural identity structure based on cultural homogeneity constructs the logic of "Chinese cultural orientation" in the process of national modernization, which is manifested in the political space of the country as the nation-state promotes the fusion of political patriotism and cultural nationalism as two value systems in the whole society, and establishes dual identity paths for citizens regarding political and cultural communities, thus forming the unique connotation of China's modernization model from cultural identity to national identity.

5. OPTIMIZING THE PATH FROM CULTURAL IDENTITY TO NATIONAL IDENTITY UNDER THE GOALS OF CHINA'S MODERNIZATION

Xu Jilin believes that the biggest event affecting the world in the 21st century may be China's rise, but as the country's power grows, its internal order is challenged by tense external situations. Internally, after the collapse of the traditional Confucian-centric world community, the modern nation-state becomes an unavoidable new collective identity for individuals (Xu, 2024). In order to address the risk of cultural and political disintegration that may be transmitted from outside in, a viable strategy must be found to rebuild a new national identity.

5.1. From Cultural Identity to National Identity in the New Era: The Intrinsic Characteristics of China's Modernization Path

China's modernization path is both similar to and distinct from the modernization paths of other countries in the world. Its similarity is manifested in the common industrialization, urbanization, technological development, and globalization processes shared by China and the rest of the world, reflecting a commonality of human civilization development. American scholar Kevin Kelly describes the modernity process throughout the world as a commonality of human society: "Cultural evolution follows similar trajectories in different parts of the world," and "looking back through the history of each continent, we see similar sequences of inventions." Technological progress in various parts of the world follows a clearly similar technological process, and "all inventions follow this unified developmental sequence that exists in all civilizations and societies, independent of human talent"(Hong & Li, 2023), according to historian David Christian. From the long-term perspective of civilization, the modern path of both Chinese and Western societies has modernity features driven by technological progress. The uniqueness of China's modernization lies mainly in the uniqueness of its cultural modernization path. On the one hand, unlike the Western society that started its modernization process from the Protestant Reformation, China's modernization path originated from the broad Confucian culture's acceptance and inclusiveness of modern science and technology, which requires us to embrace cultural exchanges and mutual learning between East and West to accommodate conflicts between different civilizations. The process of China's cultural modernization must transcend cultural conflicts and achieve exchanges and mutual learning. On the other hand, unlike the national identity and religious identity of Western nations, the characteristics of China's cultural identity-based state determine that the path of China's cultural modernization must build a socialist advanced culture that integrates excellent traditional Chinese culture, science and technology culture, and revolutionary culture, to create a more advanced cultural community with higher levels of inclusiveness that can accommodate national identity and religious identity. Reconstructing the path of socialist advanced cultural identity to modern Chinese identity is the core manifestation of China's stable state as a civilizational-type country, and is also the external expression of a firm national identity. The mass cultural psychology of modern national identity is inherent in the historical and cultural field of the nation-state, and in the long-term historical perspective, national identity is a cross-regional, long-term cultural construction agenda that

must be continuously advanced. Transitional nation-states need to reorganize the cultural identity logic in the political domain from a historical and cultural perspective. The proposal of the Chinese-style modernization path includes the historical logic of shifting from the "other" narrative of the West to the "self" narrative of the Chinese nation.

5.2. Further improve the National Cultural Structure and Clarify Policy Paths for Enhancing National Identity

(1) Optimize the external structure of national culture. The external structure of national culture fundamentally reflects a national cultural system, and in the long-term historical cycle of operation, the coupled structure also exists in structural dissipation. Suppressing structural dissipation of the national cultural structure is an important focus for enhancing national identity in the new era. First, Strengthen research on the borders of the frontier and the ocean, and enhance national territorial identity. Further leverage the inherent advantage of China as a civilization-rich country, and mobilize academic resources to strengthen research on the borders of the frontier and the ocean, so that the historical Chinese territory and the geographical space of the Chinese nation can be universally recognized by the international community, and the territorial boundaries of the country can obtain legal confirmation within the international system, thereby promoting China's further integration into the multilateral international system and fostering national identity for the historical territory and territorial map of the Chinese nation in the process. Second, Continue to promote sustainable improvement of the ecological environment. Continuously implement the national policy of ecological environmental protection, connect the protection and utilization of ecological environment with economic and social development, achieve near-term and medium-term "carbon peak" development goals, improve the clean energy supply structure, and move towards a long-term "carbon neutral" society. Strengthen land and space governance, actively fulfill the task of afforestation and ecological restoration, and increase forest coverage by returning farmland to forest; implement the near-sea ecological restoration plan strictly, and implement the 10-year ban on fishing on the Yangtze River to protect the mother river; further improve the management mechanism of ecological protection areas and national parks, and create a beautiful "natural home" for the people, thereby enhancing the satisfaction and identification of the people with their "beautiful home" and "beautiful life". Third, based on the cultural root of China, promote the construction of China's independent knowledge

system. Starting from the continuity of the academic tradition from ancient times to the present, re-establish the dual "problematique" of the value function of traditional knowledge for contemporary Chinese social practice and the value function of contemporary practical experience for the modernization of traditional knowledge. Based on China's own cultural and practical subjectivity, summarize the contemporary Chinese reform practice and development experience, and continuously promote the prosperity of China's distinctive philosophy and social sciences. Fourth, continuously promote economic development, people's well-being, and enhance the ability and level of national governance. For any society, to construct national identity means that people can enjoy freedom, development, and happiness brought by the state. It depends on individuals building their own national identity, and it also depends on the state providing a good environment for the formation of national identity. (National identity) identification is more dependent on the state's construction of national (political and economic community) identification, which is a two-way journey. The state must continuously promote high-quality economic development, promote high-level self-reliance and self-strengthening in science and technology, coordinate the comprehensive revitalization of towns and villages, and enhance people's well-being; continuously promote the modernization of state governance and governance capacity, and promote the comprehensive modernization of China's socialism with Chinese characteristics to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and build a beautiful society characterized by "prosperity, democracy, civilization, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship." (2). Optimize the implicit structure of national culture. The theory of national culture structure and the national identity type of Chinese culture identity indicate that national identity cannot be higher than ethnic identity, and ethnic identity is connected with national identity through cultural identity. Therefore, it should be rebuilt through the common cultural foundation and cultural symbolic symbols of the Chinese nation, to increase the overlapping content of ethnic identity and national identity, so as to consolidate the sense of community of the Chinese nation and ultimately form the national cultural soft power that supports national revival. First, continuously promote the construction of advanced socialist culture in contemporary China that integrates excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and science and technology culture. Continuously promote the combination of the basic principles of Marxism with China's specific reality and with traditional Chinese culture, especially in the latter

combination, continuously promote the "Origin of Chinese Civilization Project" to uncover the true rationality of Chinese culture from the "source-stream interpenetration" trajectory of Chinese culture to civilization, build the historical foundation of the Chinese people's "spiritual home" and reveal the inevitability of constructing Chinese national identity from Chinese cultural identity. Second, enhance the rigidity, constraint and proactivity of national culture, maintain the autonomy, continuity and unity of Chinese culture. Adhere to the fundamental position of Chinese culture, firmly maintain the national cultural narrative style of the Chinese nation as the main body and socialist advanced culture as the main line, respect cultural diversity and historical facts, prevent the weakening, deconstruction and nihilism of the main historical narrative, integrate religious history, regional history into national history narrative, highlight the historical rigidity of national culture. Third, accommodate "others" in the principle of "seeking common ground while reserving differences" and build a more inclusive Chinese culture, promote dialogue and cultural exchange and mutual learning among different civilizations. Respect the religious beliefs of ethnic minorities in different national and regional areas, protect, inherit, and promote ethnic and regional cultures, enriching the cultural connotation of the Chinese nation; implement the "Belt and Road" people-to-people connectivity project, establish and improve the mechanism for dialogue among the great river civilizations of the world, and promote the construction of a global human civilization community.

6. STRENGTHEN THE INTERACTION AND MUTUAL SUPPORT BETWEEN EXPLICIT STRUCTURE AND IMPLICIT STRUCTURE

In the process of national cultural construction, the political and economic entity of the state must play a leading role and assume the role of "meta-governance" for national culture. In the context of globalization, rebuilding the path from cultural identity to national identity requires placing China within the global system of nation-states and placing Chinese culture within the broader context of global cultural integration. This can be achieved by optimizing the explicit and implicit structures of national culture. As the representative of the Chinese nation's cultural commonwealth, the state needs to fulfill four roles: First, it needs to assume the role of a strategic designer of cultural policies, fostering a correct

national and ethnic identity in society. Strengthen confidence in the cultural path, theoretical system, institutional system, and ontological system of culture; To build a national interest value judgment standard that transcends ethnic, religious, and geographical interests, and to foster and solidify the sense of a common Chinese nation. Secondly, to assume the role of builders of a cultural powerhouse, flourishing cultural undertakings and industries, achieving national cultural production and reproduction. Promoting socialist core values, inheriting and innovating outstanding traditional Chinese culture; deepening cultural system reform, enhancing public cultural service levels, improving the modern cultural industry system, and building a modern cultural market system; fully utilizing digital technologies such as the internet, 5G, and big data to promote in-depth integration of culture and tourism, and innovating cultural and tourism consumption scenarios; absorbing and learning from the advanced experience in cultural management of Western countries, taking the lead, and promoting creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture. Thirdly, to assume the role of a platform for social communication and negotiation, establishing a broadly recognized cultural value consensus. Ensure the balance of "rights" and "obligations" between different social units at the institutional level, guarantee the effectiveness of dialogue, communication, and negotiation, and suppress the "deviation" of ethnic, religious, and regional demands caused by information asymmetry. Provide pipelines for grassroots to maintain cultural rights, and establish a mechanism for identifying the authenticity of cultural identity, so that national identity of the people is based on the true rational consensus of Chinese cultural identity rather than false consensus, enabling people's cultural claims to align with their own cultural actions, and motivation and behavior to be consistent. Fourth, we should assume the role of a speaker to tell China's stories well and promote Chinese culture to the world. Demonstrate the subjectivity of contemporary Chinese social and cultural life through artistic interpretation of Chinese excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture. Carve the "poetic" aesthetics of "poetic" China with "poetic" aesthetics, and tell the "poetic" humanistic China; achieve self-renewal and innovation of culture through efficient allocation of various cultural resources through developed cultural market, and create colorful cultural products by modern market entities; strengthen cultural exchanges and cross-border cooperation, actively carry out cross-border cultural research, tap the international historical document value of cultural relics and historical documents, and provide a framework for cultural projection and

communication between Chinese culture and Western culture, integrating the national identity of the Chinese people into the great cause of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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